

Silas D. Byram

Silas D. Byram, proprietor of the "Central Hotel," Liberty, Ind. This citizen is a native of the village of Liberty, where he was born September 20, 1828.

His parents were William and Abby D. (Miller) Byram, the former of English descent. One of his paternal ancestors, coming from England, settled, in the early history of the colonies, in Massachusetts, and from him sprang the Byrams of New Jersey, where William was born in Essex County, in the year 1800, being one of a family of thirteen children.

His wife, too, was a native of New Jersey, and with her people immigrated to Preble County, Ohio, in an early day. Here she married William Byram in 1825, and to them were born the following-named children that reached mature life: Huldah M., Silas D., Adaline, John C. and Ellis (several died in infancy). Of the three living, John C. and Ellis are in California. Mrs. Byram died May 10, 1871, aged sixty-seven years.

At the age of seventeen years, William Byram left his home in Morristown, N. J., and with a friend walked to Dayton, Ohio, making, according to his diary, 621 miles in thirty-six days. About the year 1825, he settled in Liberty when heavy forests occupied almost the whole site of the village. By trade, he was a plasterer and mason; but able to do any kind of work, and willing to be actively engaged, he, perhaps, as much as any other man, helped to change this place from a wilderness to a habitable country with a prosperous community, and as a citizen he was known only to be respected and honored.

For fifty-one years successively, his ballot was deposited in the one place, and, as near as any man's might, it fell on the side of God and right. He was always the friend of good, just and philanthropic measures. Justice, honesty, uprightness and straightforwardness were marked characteristics of the man.

He resided in Liberty until 1834, and then moved to what is now the Dr. Morris farm in Center Township, where he lived until death. From 1840 to 1848, he served as County Treasurer. At the time of his death (February 11, 1877), he had been a professed Christian and a member of the Presbyterian Church for more than sixty years. He was always in his place at every church service.

When the Presbyterian Church was organized here in 1829, he was one of the original thirteen members, and remained actively connected with it until his death. As an illustration of his faithfulness to the church, it may be said that in all

the forty-eight years of the church's life he was absent but from two communions, sickness being the cause. He was a useful citizen.

Our subject was reared in Liberty and vicinity and trained in the common schools of the village and at the seminary of William Haughton at Beech Grove, and was a classmate of the late Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside and others who became distinguished.

After reaching his majority, Mr. Byram learned blacksmithing, which he followed for some eleven years. In the fall of 1857, he began merchandising, and started the first exclusive grocery store in the village. At the breaking-out of the war of the rebellion, in April, 1861, he was chosen Second Lieutenant of Company F, Sixteenth Regiment Indiana Volunteers, and in August of that year was transferred to the signal service under Gen. Myers, with which branch of the service he remained until the middle of June, 1862, being in Gen. Banks' division of the Army of the Potomac, and for meritorious service Mr. Byram was presented with a signal flag.

Since the war, he has been variously occupied, farming a little, and for a time engaged in the boot and shoe business, and subsequently in the grocery business. In 1879, he began keeping hotel and is still so engaged, being the proprietor of the "Central Hotel," which is in every respect a first-class house; the building is new, large and roomy, and things within are correspondingly neat and inviting.

Mr. Byram has been twice married, the first time, in 1852, to Lizzie Goodwin, who died in 1855. To them were born Ida F. and Charles C. His second marriage was with Laucetta Harris, a daughter of Zachariah G. Harris, which took place January 12, 1863. She is a native of Maryland. To them the following children were born: Ada J., Lizzie (deceased), Mary H., Margaret D., Lina Louise and Morris C. Mr. Byram and family are members of the Presbyterian Church, and are highly esteemed people. He is a member of the Masonic order, and in politics a Republican.

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